

01038909

10 THE PRESIDING JUDGE: Prosecutor, you have the floor.

11 MR. OSTBERG: Thank you very much. We would like to call our next witness, Lieutenant
12 Koster.

13 LIEUTENANT KOSTER called.

14 THE PRESIDING JUDGE: Lieutenant Koster, do you hear me? Do you hear me? Please take
15 the statement which has been given to you and read it out.

16 (The witness was sworn)

17 THE WITNESS: I solemnly I declare that I will speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing
18 but the truth.

19 THE PRESIDING JUDGE: Thank you, Lieutenant. Please be seated.

20 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

21 THE PRESIDING JUDGE: I think my first question would go to the Prosecutor and he will
22 introduce you to us.

23 MR. OSTBERG: Thank you, your Honour.

24 Examined by MR. OSTBERG

25 Q. Lieutenant Koster, would you please state your full name and spell it for the record?

26 A. My last name is Koster, I spell K-O-S-T-E-R.

27 Q. Thank you. What is your present occupation?

28 A. I am a logistic officer and an infantry soldier.

29 Q. In the Dutch Army?

30 A. In the Dutch Army, that is correct.

31 Q. Have you been serving with the United Nations?

32 A. Yes, I did.

33 Q. Would you please tell the court where and when?

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Witness: Koster

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- 1 A. I served in Srebrenica and that was January 1995 till July '95.
- 2 Q. When did you start, you say?
- 3 A. In January.
- 4 Q. In January. Was Colonel Karremans your Commanding Officer?
- 5 A. Yes, he was.
- 6 Q. What was your position with the Dutch Battalion?
- 7 A. My position was to be the Logistics Officer of the Battalion.
- 8 Q. Just give us the outline of your duties in that position?
- 9 A. Well, I had to manage all logistic affairs, although we had few means and, well, that meant
- 10 very strict planning and distributing our logistic affairs.
- 11 Q. Where in the chain of command were you placed in that position?
- 12 A. I was a staff officer and my direct Commander, my Logistic Commander was Major
- 13 Franken.
- 14 Q. Thank you. Were you on duty in the beginning of July 1995?
- 15 A. Yes, I was.
- 16 Q. Where?
- 17 A. I was on duty in Potocari, inside the compound.
- 18 Q. Inside the compound, so your working place was inside the compound mostly?
- 19 A. Most of the time, yes.
- 20 Q. OK. You were there even on 11th July 1995?
- 21 A. Yes, I was also outside the compound then, yes.
- 22 Q. Will you tell us about what happened after the fall of Srebrenica when refugees started to
- 23 arrive in Potocari?
- 24 A. Yes, it was on 12th, sorry, it was on 11th July, we were ordered to go outside and to form
- 25 a unit to receive the refugees, so we went outside and made a hole in the fence from where
- 26 we could guide the refugees towards the compound.
- 27 When we were posted outside, approximately at 1500 hours the refugees arrived
- 28 in a few and small groups at first and, well, most of them were women and children and
- 29 older women and older men. They were terrified, they were afraid, looking for help, and
- 30 when we were there, well, we could not tell them what to do at that point.
- 31 Q. You said that you formed a unit to take care of the incoming refugees. How big was that
- 32 unit?
- 33 A. Well, approximately 30 men at first.

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Witness: Koster

1 Q. Were you in command of these 30 men?

2 A. Yes, I was.

3 Q. You said you opened a hole in the fence?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Is that the way you led them into the compound?

6 A. Yes, we were not allowed to let them in by the main gate.

7 Q. Why?

8 A. Because of the road which led from Srebrenica to Potocari was constantly on the direct
9 sight, in direct fire from the Serbs. For example, when the days before, when we left the
10 compound by vehicle, we were fired upon with mortar fire and that kind of thing. So, it
11 was better for the people to take another route and another way to the compound which
12 was more covered by trees and buildings.

13 Q. They opened that hole in the fence?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. When people started to arrive, the first ones who arrived, did you show them all in into the
16 compound?

17 A. No, we were not allowed at first. We first showed them the way to the large buildings of a
18 former bus station where bus repair and bus maintenance was done, and we told them to
19 take cover inside of these buildings.

20 Q. When you are saying that you were not allowed, allowed by whom?

21 A. By my Commander.

22 Q. Commander?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. What was the kind of shelter you gave them?

25 A. Sorry?

26 Q. What kind of shelter did you give them?

27 A. The big buildings of the former bus station.

28 Q. Outside the compound?

29 A. It was outside the compound, yes.

30 Q. Then when did they start entering the compound?

31 A. Well, that was later on that day when the total amount of people was going to be a big
32 crowd, we were ordered to let the people through the compound in small groups of 25
33 persons, and send them through the hole in the fence to the compound.

Witness: Koster

1 Q. How did these people arrive?

2 A. Well, like I said before, at first in small groups, later on there was one big mass of people
3 coming down the road from Srebrenica to Potocari and, well, they came with a big noise,
4 women crying, children screaming, children also crying. Well, people were in terror. They
5 came down the road towards our position.

6 Q. On foot?

7 A. On foot, yes. When we could receive them, we just only could tell them to wait and to stay
8 at our position. We could not tell them what to do and they were keeping asking these
9 questions from, you know, "What are we going to do?" or "What are the plans for now?"
10 They were very much afraid of what was going on with them, what was going to happen
11 with them, but we could not tell them, so They were -----

12 Q. Had they walked the way from the city of Srebrenica?

13 A. Most of them. There were several vehicles from the compound in Srebrenica to the
14 compound in Potocari carrying some wounded, but when they started to move, not
15 wounded people picked their places and also in every spot of the vehicle where they could
16 hang on, they got a place.

17 Q. When you are talking about these vehicles, were they the UN vehicles?

18 A. Yes, they were our UN vehicles, yes, trucks.

19 Q. No other means of transportation like buses or trucks for these fleeing people?

20 A. Well, some APCs for medical aid. Those APCs were also carrying some kind of wounded
21 people and some healthy people towards our position and moving people toward the
22 compound, yes.

23 Q. They started coming in small groups and then they grew more and more?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Can you make estimations, looking at what time they started and then how they slowly
26 encompassed a big crowd of people?

27 A. Yes, well, I was ordered to make a rough counting of the people constantly. Well, it
28 started by with 10 people, then hundreds of people and then even more thousands of
29 people. Well, it started approximately, they started coming around about 1500 hours and,
30 well, until late in the evening it stopped. So, for example, the road had a diameter of six
31 metres and was fully crowded with people, most of them women, children and older men.

32 Q. When you said you started to count them, did you do that yourself?

Witness: Koster

1 A. Yes, and later on that day I compared with my colleagues to make a rough counting of the
2 total number of people and we came to a number of approximately 15,000 people.

3 Q. 15,000 people?

4 A. 15,000 people, yes.

5 Q. How many of them were led into or brought into the compound?

6 A. Well, on top of the 15,000 there were 4,000 to 5,000 people let into the compound. So, at
7 the end of the day, there were 15,000 outside the compound and 4,00 to 5,000 people
8 inside the compound.

9 Q. We are talking now about 11th July?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Did they stop coming in the evening?

12 A. Yes, they stopped and there were -- the crowds stopped. There were a few people coming
13 down the road still, but the big mass, the big mass of people, the big crowd, stopped
14 coming towards our position, yes, and it was fully filled with people.

15 Q. What did 30 soldiers do to care for these people?

16 A. Well, during the day I ordered for some reinforcements because we could not stand any
17 longer to hold the people. We had some interpreters to make it clear for them what to do
18 and, well, what we were doing down there was the best we could; give them some medical
19 help, telling them that we would guide them and escort them and guard them and protect
20 them for the best we could. Well, whether it was help, any help needed, we were there.

21 Q. That with 30 persons?

22 A. Well, I ordered some reinforcements, so later on that day I guess it would be 50 to 60 men
23 outside.

24 Q. What kind of medical support could you give them?

25 A. Mainly first aid.

26 Q. Like bandages and things like that?

27 A. If we had some, yes, some bandages. There were several wounded men and women, also
28 women giving birth to children at our place. We also had some assistance from MSF.

29 Q. MSF is?

30 A. Medicine sans Frontieres. So, the wounded we could give them only the first aid because
31 we did not have more means outside, also inside the compound.

32 Q. What about giving them food and drink then?

Witness: Koster

1 A. Well, outside it was impossible for us to do because we had so scarce means of food rations
2 and all that, so we could not give them any food outside the compound. From what I have
3 learned later on is that we made a soup of food rations mixed, mingled with water for the
4 people inside the compound. Outside the compound, some people were carrying jerry cans
5 and bottles of water, carrying water with them. Nearby our position, there was a small
6 well where people could get some water, so that was -- it was needed because it was
7 tremendously hot that day, so water was a very needed factor over there.

8 Q. So the people inside could get some soup to eat or drink, but outside could you give them
9 anything at all, apart from the water from the well?

10 A. Yes, that is correct.

11 Q. Could you paint the picture of what it looked like when night fall came? What did it look
12 like in and around the compound then?

13 A. Well, it was like being on a scene. It was a little bit surrealistic. Being outside, these
14 people, I slept outside, also my men slept outside. We did some patrolling that night. We
15 had some posts to protect them. Well, the big noise stopped, all the screaming, etc. and all
16 the shouting and crying stopped during the night, although little children kept crying on and
17 the noise decreased, so ... but it was very surrealistic being there.

18 Q. Were there any attacks from the Bosnian Serb Army or any soldiers or units attacking this
19 amount of people?

20 A. Well, not in person but we were fired upon with mortar fire during the day. Well, the
21 shelling was not among the people, well, it was very close, close firing, approximately 50
22 metres from our position, among the houses nearby our position the explosions of the
23 grenades and the mortar grenades came down, yes.

24 Q. But these crowds of people were not shelled or fired at directly?

25 A. Not directly, no. No.

26 Q. Then you said you had some 30 people and some reinforcements; what about the rest of the
27 personnel of the Dutch Battalion? Where were they deployed during this time? What I
28 want to know is how many persons, how many soldiers, of the Battalion in total were
29 present in Potocari when this flood of refugees arrived?

30 A. Well, it should be approximately 200 men, I guess.

31 Q. 200 men?

32 A. Yes, I guess.

33 Q. Where were the rest of the Battalion deployed?

Witness: Koster

1 A. They were assigned to the OPs.

2 Q. These are?

3 A. Observation posts.

4 Q. Observation posts?

5 A. Yes. Also, part of them were located in the compound of Srebrenica, but most of these
6 men and women were supply forces, so they were not fighter men, they were not
7 infantrymen.

8 Q. But the ones you are talking about in Potocari were fighting men, infantry soldiers?

9 A. A few of them, yes, but most of them were supply forces.

10 Q. Most of them were supply forces. Were any of your personnel taken hostage or assaulted
11 during this day, the 11th?

12 A. No, not on 11th.

13 Q. OK. Could any of you have any rest the night between 11th and 12th July last year?

14 A. Well, for me personally, no. For the most of them, I guess not because you were busy
15 helping people, doing some patrolling outside the compound among the people. Well,
16 maybe you could get an hour or two sleep, but, well, it was not such a rest. You could not
17 rest very well.

18 Q. Will you then turn your attention to the following day and give us an account of what
19 happened on 12th July 1995?

20 A. Well, in the morning it was relatively quietly. The people, well, they woke up and started
21 asking questions about what was going on, and what we were planning to do and what the
22 Serbs were planning to do, so we could not tell.

23 We carried on giving them medical aid; still wounded people came down to our
24 position, asking for a doctor, asking for medical help; still women were looking for their
25 children like the day before because they lost their children in the big crowd of people; also
26 children looking for their families and that kind of things. That carried on all morning and
27 also the sun also appeared again, so it became tremendously hot again that day. Later on
28 that day, approximately at 1300 hours ---

29 Q. At what time?

30 A. -- 1300 hours, yes, we heard a noise of tanks and APCs, and I heard by radio that there was
31 a tank and an APC coming down the road toward the compound. So the people, well,
32 there was panic and the people were scared and they ran down to the south of our location,
33 and so we had to wait what was going on then and wait for the Serbs to make a move.

Witness: Koster

1 Q. OK.

2 A. When they did they came to our position and also to the compound.

3 Q. You are talking about the army, the Bosnian Serb Army?

4 A. That is correct, yes. They came to our position and we made a demarcation line of some
5 red and white tape over the road and, well, they stayed behind the tape. Some of them
6 asked for the commanding officer at my location, so that was me, and he introduced himself
7 and so did I. I cannot remember his name.

8 I asked him what he was planning to do and he did not tell me. Well, after that
9 he turned his back on me and went down to his forces. At that time there were, well,
10 approximately 20 to 30 Serbian soldiers at our position at the road. Well, their action was
11 just walking around looking at the people, also shouting at the people, asking questions. I
12 had an interpreter next to me so he could translate what they were saying.

13 Q. Could you give us an example of what they said to the people?

14 A. Well, most of the times they were mocking at them, and doing that it was a very odd
15 situation because they sat down on the ground and started to begin singing, and they also --
16 they actually did not make a move. They were just staying over there at their location
17 behind the red and white tape probably, I do not know what to do. So we just could stay
18 there and wait what they were going to do.

19 Q. Then what happened?

20 A. Later on that day, Major Nikolic came down also to my position and he introduced
21 himself.

22 Q. Did you know him beforehand?

23 A. Yes, I recognised him from photos in the Operations room. Well, he wanted to have a look
24 among the people and he wanted to walk through to the other end of our location. At that
25 time it was reported from my southern post, which was the last units of the Bravo
26 Company, that also at their location some Serbian soldiers arrived.

27 Well, we escorted the Major Nikolic with our liaison officer and an observer and
28 he walked down through the people. After that, he returned and also the situation stayed
29 the same for a couple of hours probably. Then one of the commanders came to my position
30 and told me that he would bring a vehicle loaded with bread for the people, and that we
31 should make way for this vehicle and it really appeared and then they started to give bread
32 to the people. They also had a camera team accompanying them and the camera team,
33 well, they were filming while they were giving bread to the people.

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1 Q. How many people did get some bread? Did they have something for everybody?

2 A. No, not at all. There was a very small truck and, well, they were throwing the bread and
3 giving the bread to the people. My interpreter told me while they were doing that they
4 were shouting at the people again and mocking of them and calling them names.

5 Well, the vehicle returned for one more time also loaded with bread, and also a
6 fire truck came down to our position to give the people some water and, well, one by one
7 women were allowed to leave the crowd and to fill up their bottles with water.
8 Everything was filmed by the Serbs. Then the fire truck disappeared again.

9 Later on that day, should be approximately at 1600 hours, more troops came
10 down to our position, more vehicles, more jeeps, more civilian vehicles. At one time my
11 interpreter told me that he thought he had seen General Mladic, and General Mladic came
12 to my position. He introduced himself and so did I. He asked me who was the commander
13 in charge. I asked him what he was planning to do. Well, at first, he did not tell me
14 nothing and he walked right through our line of tape and towards the people. At that time,
15 of course, I reported to my commanding officer and I was told that I should send Mladic to
16 the compound, to Colonel Karremans, so he could talk to him, but he would not do so.

17 Q. He would not?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Who would not, Mladic?

20 A. General Mladic, no.

21 Q. So you asked him to go and talk to the commanding officer?

22 A. Yes, several times.

23 Q. He said no?

24 A. He said, "No, I am doing what I please to do and I am in charge here and nobody tells me
25 what to do, and I am outside here, and you will see what is going to happen". He told us to
26 co-operate or else there would be -- we were, you know, told to co-operate with him; we
27 would be best off by co-operating.

28 Q. You said "or else", did he ----

29 A. No, we would be best off by co-operating. Those were the words said.

30 Q. Yes. Go on with the story, please.

31 A. Then he went to the people and he spoke to the people not to be afraid; he should, he
32 would take care of them. He was talking to little children accompanied by a filming team, a
33 camera team. I was constantly protesting that he should go to the compound. While doing

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1 that, some buses arrived and I reported that. Then I asked him again what he was going to
2 do and he was irritated, and he told me that he would evacuate the people to another place.

3 At once some of the Serbian soldiers pulled down several of my men.

4 Q. What did they do?

5 A. They pulled down and pulled away several of my men who were holding the civilians and,
6 well, the Serbs told the civilians to go to the buses, to get inside the buses. Well, at that
7 time the situation was taken out of our hands and we could only escort the people and
8 provide any harm of the people and they were fully in charge at that time.

9 Q. How many Bosnian Serb troops were present then, in your estimation?

10 A. Well, I estimated approximately 40, 50 men and, well, they were still coming up, more men,
11 men with dogs, all that kind of thing.

12 Q. You were outnumbered?

13 A. Yes, we were severely outnumbered, yes, that is true.

14 Q. OK, please go on.

15 A. Then I was told to escort the people and to provide any harming of the people, and we
16 could not do anything else than just escorting them, and the Serbs took over and they
17 pushed the people to go to the buses and they kept on doing that till the buses were fully
18 stuffed with people. They were putting far more people inside the bus than normally is
19 usual. The buses drove away. Then we had to stop the people again and we had to wait
20 till other transport arrived at our location.

21 Q. Did you in any way convoy or send somebody with the buses when they went away?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Tell us about that.

24 A. I learned later that we escorted the buses and the trucks by sending some of our men with a
25 jeep driving in front with the buses. But, well, the first transport, well, they succeeded
26 escorting them and the other transports, well, the jeeps were taken away from us and so we
27 could not escort them any more.

28 Q. By the Serbian soldiers?

29 A. Yes.

30 Q. Bosnian Serb soldiers, yes. Was any separation of sexes taking place before they were
31 loaded on buses?

Witness: Koster

1 A. Yes, well, they were looking for men, older men, well, men of fighting age, potential
2 fighting men. They were separating them from their families and from the rest of the
3 people. Well, they kept on doing that the whole time.

4 Q. What happened to these men who were separated from their families? Where did they go?

5 A. They put them inside of a house and, from what I have seen, they were just sitting there
6 and waiting. Their personal belongings were taken away and put outside of the house and I
7 only saw these men waiting. As far as we could, we were protesting against it, but we
8 were, as you said before, outnumbered so we could not be at all places.

9 Q. Of course. What about General Mladic, was he present when these things went on?

10 A. Well, I lost sight of him. When the first buses started to drive away, I lost sight of him.

11 Q. This transportation of people started, as I remember as you said, about 1600?

12 A. That was the time when General Mladic arrived ---

13 Q. When he arrived.

14 A. -- and, well, it should not be more than half hour or an hour later when the buses arrived
15 and drove away.

16 Q. How many bus loads of people left Potocari this day, 12th?

17 A. I did not count them at all, but, well, they started -- sorry, they ended up when night fell.

18 Q. With night fall they stopped?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Do you have any idea how many bus loads that was? Do you have any idea how many
21 people left on the first day?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Half, a third, no idea?

24 A. No, I have no estimation.

25 Q. You can make no estimation. They stopped at night fall, you said?

26 A. Yes.

27 Q. Still then people were inside and outside the compound?

28 A. Yes, that is correct.

29 Q. Was anybody taken out of the compound on this first day and put on the buses or was that
30 people from outside?

31 A. From what I know, there were people from outside the compound because I was there. I
32 do not know if people from inside the compound were taken outside because I could not
33 see it from my position.

Witness: Koster

1 Q. You could not see it?

2 A. I do not know that.

3 Q. OK. Then night came; can you tell us something about what happened during the night?

4 A. Yes. We were told by the Serbs that we had to clear the road and to join the people on the
5 terrain in front of the former bus station.

6 Q. Clear the road from the refugees?

7 A. Yes. The road should stay open because they told us there could be some transport moving
8 to Srebrenica and from Srebrenica to Potocari. Well, we collected the people at that point
9 and we stayed there patrolling during the night and the Serbs, they left. Some of them
10 came back during the night and they were taking our arms, and also our vests and helmets
11 and equipment.

12 Q. Could you describe in what way they did that?

13 A. Well, they joined, they formed groups of three or four men and then they walked up to a
14 UN soldier and told him to give away his weapon and his bulletproof vest and his helmet
15 and his equipment and when he refused that, he was forced to do so.

16 Q. At gun point?

17 A. I personally at gun point, yes.

18 Q. How many of your soldiers did lose their equipment in this way?

19 A. I do not know. Many of them.

20 Q. Many out of these 30, 40 soldiers?

21 A. Yes, that is correct.

22 Q. The majority?

23 A. The majority, yes.

24 Q. That went on during the night?

25 A. Yes, in the beginning of the night. Later on that night they disappeared and I did not know
26 where they went. We were alone with these people and then they were very, very quiet.
27 Well, we kept on patrolling during the night and, well, helping some sick people and also
28 again wounded people who still asked for doctors, for medical help, and we had a doctor
29 outside our position -- well, till the morning came.

30 Q. OK. Then we arrive at 13th July. I will now ask you to tell the court what happened on
31 that day.

32 A. On 13th, well, we put down four APCs on the road to make some of the ----

33 Q. APCs stands for the ----

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- 1 A. Armoured personnel carrier.
- 2 Q. Armoured personnel carrier -- armoured?
- 3 A. Armoured, yes, sorry -- to make some of them an artificial gate so we could guide the
- 4 people in a better way. Then, at approximately 700 hours, the buses arrived and half an
- 5 hour later the Serbs arrived, and then there were more and more troops coming down to
- 6 our position and when ----
- 7 Q. Again an estimation, if you can, how many troops?
- 8 A. At least 50, 60 of them. Again they start again to pull away my men and to put the people
- 9 inside of the buses and the trucks and that carried on during the day.
- 10 Q. Any attacks on you or your personnel during the day?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 Q. Shooting?
- 13 A. No.
- 14 Q. Nothing?
- 15 A. We heard some shooting on the west side of the compound coming from houses and that
- 16 kind of thing, but not in my position, there was no shooting.
- 17 Q. Did this separation type of handling, this thing, did that go on even this day? Did they
- 18 separate men from the rest of their families or was that only on the first day?
- 19 A. No, it still went on that day and, for example, we saw a 19 year old boy being separated
- 20 from his family and, well, we protested against it and the Serbian soldier, he was impressed,
- 21 and let the boy go to the buses, but they carried on separating the men, yes.
- 22 Q. That went on this the 13th July all day?
- 23 A. From what I have seen, yes.
- 24 Q. When was the place emptied of refugees or everybody evacuated, when was that?
- 25 A. I will have to look it up, one moment, please. It was on 13th July.
- 26 Q. 13th July?
- 27 A. Yes.
- 28 Q. What time of the day, can you recall that?
- 29 A. Well, to be approximately, at 1800 hours. I had to do my report at the compound and get
- 30 some food and a few hours of sleep, two hours, and it was at 1600 hours when I reported
- 31 to duty in the Operations room it was at 1830. I was told it was not necessary any more
- 32 because all the people had gone.
- 33 Q. All of them.

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1 A. All of them had gone.

2 Q. Even the people who were in the compound?

3 A. Yes, except the wounded people.

4 Q. Except of the wounded people?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. They left the wounded people? What about the men who were separated? Were they still
7 around or were they gone also?

8 A. They were also gone.

9 Q. Did you see them go?

10 A. No, because I was on the compound asleep.

11 Q. Did you see when the people were taken from that compound into the buses?

12 A. No, I did not see.

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6 Q. So by the evening of 13th the place was empty, there were no refugees any more?

7 A. Outside the compound, inside also, no, except the wounded people.

8 Q. The wounded people. Did you see General Mladic more than these times on the 12th that
9 you talked about?

10 A. Yes, during the night on 12th and on the 13th, during that night, I saw him passing by our
11 position sitting in a jeep and he moved up to Srebrenica, and later on that night he moved
12 back towards Potocari.

13 Q. So you saw him twice during that night?

14 A. Sorry?

15 Q. You saw him twice during that night?

16 A. Yes, that is correct.

17 Q. But he did not stop?

18 A. No.

19 Q. You did not talk to him?

20 A. He just drove on.

21 Q. OK. Then when only the wounded people were left, what happened then? What did you do
22 in the coming days?

23 A. Well, for me, personally, I picked up my job again as logistics officer and doing the things
24 requested and waiting for us to leave the enclave, and we were making preparations for
25 leaving the enclave because we did not know if we could leave with all our equipment or
26 just by taking our personal belongings and then leave the compound. So I took up my old
27 job.

28 Q. As a logistics officer, you can certainly tell us how much equipment did you lose during
29 these days?

30 A. Well, I do not know the exact numbers and figures. We lose weapons, we did lose some
31 jeeps.

32 Q. How many jeeps?

33 A. I do not know the exact figures.

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Case No. IT-95-5-R61

Witness: Koster

1 Q. Can you make an estimate?

2 A. No.

3 Q. You cannot.

4 A. APCs, we lost APCs, and we lost, well, equipment, soldiers' equipment and bulletproof
5 vests and helmets.

6 Q. When did you leave? When did the Battalion leave Srebrenica?

7 A. It was on 21st, on Friday, July.

8 Q. The week after?

9 A. A week after that, yes.

10 MR. OSTBERG: Thank you very much. Your Honours, I have concluded my examination.

11 THE PRESIDING JUDGE: Thank you, Mr. Ostberg. Fellow Judges, you have a question,
12 please proceed.

13 Examined by the Court

14 JUDGE ODIO BENITO: Thank you. Lieutenant Koster, you talk of 15,000 people coming
15 from Srebrenica to Potocari looking for help, mostly, you said, they were women and
16 children and elderly people; is that correct?

17 A. That is correct.

18 Q. Were you expecting this exodus from Srebrenica?

19 A. I am sorry. Can you repeat the question?

20 Q. Were you in Potocari, you and your team, expecting this exodus from Srebrenica?

21 A. Yes, we were outside there to receive the refugees, yes, and we had expected to come
22 refugees to our position. That was why we were posted outside.

23 Q. Were you prepared for receiving them?

24 A. No -- just being there and being posted there and doing the best we can, but we did not
25 have the equipment or medical equipment or even enough food to receive them.

26 Q. Had you, your team, asked for help to your superiors or to the superior command or NATO
27 or UNPROFOR to face this emergency?

28 A. I did not, no.

29 Q. Did you receive any additional support for help before or after 11th July?

30 A. No.

31 Q. What happened with these people, women, children, elderly, wounded people when the
32 Bosnian Serb soldiers arrived?

33 A. Well, sorry, you are only talking now about the wounded people?

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Case No. IT-95-18-R61

Case No. IT-95-5-R61

Witness: Koster

1 Q. About the women, children, elderly people in Potocari coming from Srebrenica when the
2 soldiers Serb soldiers arrived.

3 A. Well, they were afraid and they were not harmed or anything by the Serbian people, from
4 what I could see, outside the compound. Well, later on, the periods we were outside, they
5 were put inside of the buses and evacuated from my position.

6 Q. Did you hear about massacres committed by Serb soldiers against Muslims in and around
7 Srebrenica, Potocari, Bratunac at that time?

8 A. No, I only learned on the Wednesday that there was a position -- there was a rumour about
9 eight or nine bodies.

10 Q. After those days have you heard about massacres committed?

11 A. No, only when I returned in the news.

12 Q. Did Colonel Karremans or anyone else say "no" to General Mladic when he ordered the
13 evacuation of the refugees?

14 A. I do not know that because they already started it when I was reporting it, so the situation
15 was completely taken out of their hands outside.

16 Q. But the refugees were under your support, under the UN support, under the protection?

17 A. That is correct.

18 Q. So did you or your superior try to avoid that the refugees were taken out in any way?

19 A. It was not possible to do it because we were outnumbered and we were pulled away, and
20 then the Serbs, they pushed the people and shouted at the people to go to the buses now,
21 but to get inside these buses so being outnumbered we could not do anything at that time.

22 JUDGE ODIO BENITO: I see. Thank you. No further questions.

23 JUDGE RIAD: Lieutenant Kosta, you just said that you were outnumbered, completely
24 outnumbered. In fact, you were in a state of helplessness completely?

25 A. Yes, that is correct.

26 Q. Were you at any moment threatened?

27 A. In person?

28 Q. No, the whole group in your capacity, you and your colleagues?

29 A. No, we were just told to co-operate and that would be the best for us.

30 Q. Yes, yes, "best for us" means that something would be worst; if there is something best,
31 then something can be worst. You mentioned that Mladic himself told you, you had better
32 co-operate, you are all right, and then he told you, "You will see what is going to happen";
33 is that right?

Witness: Koster

- 1 A. I am sorry, I did not understand the question.
- 2 Q. Mladic, among his visits, he told you, "You are going to see what will happen". You
- 3 mentioned that from your notes.
- 4 A. I still do not understand the question. I am sorry.
- 5 Q. What did Mladic tell you?
- 6 A. OK. Yes, he told me that and later on he told me that he was going to evacuate the people
- 7 of Srebrenica.
- 8 Q. Yes.
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. Then you mentioned that you saw them separate men in fighting age from the others?
- 11 A. Yes, that is correct.
- 12 Q. Yes. Did you protest or anything?
- 13 A. Yes, we did.
- 14 Q. You did and what was the reaction to your protest?
- 15 A. Well, sometimes they let the men go with their families and their wives and, well, at the
- 16 places we were -- we could not protest or where we were not located, well, we could not
- 17 do a thing.
- 18 Q. Did they pick them just at random or did they have a list in their hands?
- 19 A. No, just at random.
- 20 Q. Because there was a list of 200 and something people which nobody knew if it was given to
- 21 them or not. Do you have any idea about that?
- 22 A. I know about that list, yes, and it was made on the compound, at the compound.
- 23 Q. I beg your pardon?
- 24 A. That list was made just to make sure and to inform the Serbs that we were watching them
- 25 ---
- 26 Q. Yes.
- 27 A. -- and keeping everything under control about what they were going to do with the men,
- 28 and so by that list we were also protecting them, so we were checking them.
- 29 Q. So this list was made by your men, by the officers?
- 30 A. No.
- 31 Q. No?
- 32 A. It was not. It was made by a committee of the refugees inside of the compound and ----
- 33 Q. And given to you?

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Case No. IT-95-5-R61

Witness: Koster

- 1 A. No, not to me.
- 2 Q. I mean, to ----
- 3 A. My commanding officer?
- 4 Q. Yes.
- 5 A. From what I know, it was not given to the Serbs.
- 6 Q. You do not know if it was given to the Serbs or not?
- 7 A. From what I know, it was not given to the Serbs.
- 8 JUDGE RIAD: It was not. Thank you very much.
- 9 THE PRESIDING JUDGE: Lieutenant, on the basis of what we have heard, apparently, there
- 10 are some vehicles from the Battalion that escorted the jeeps, some jeeps that escorted the
- 11 vehicles, so you did you have some jeeps that went along with the convoys. I take it that
- 12 those jeeps came back, at least some of them came back, so you had a chance to see some
- 13 of your men before you left the compound. What did your men tell you about what
- 14 happened and were they aware of the events?
- 15 A. I only learnt from that when we left the enclave. Before that, I was constantly being outside
- 16 until the 13th and I did not know what was going on during these escorts.
- 17 Q. Because the jeeps that were doing the escorting did not leave Potocari?
- 18 A. Some of them were already taken away at our main gate and, well, that is what they told
- 19 me while I was doing my reports. Well, at least one of them made it through and hat was
- 20 the first transport, but that is something I learned later when I left the enclave.
- 21 Q. When soldiers came back, because there was a gathering before you left the enclave, what
- 22 did people say to one another? What did soldiers say? Did anybody tell you anything? Did
- 23 they know nothing?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. Nothing was said?
- 26 A. No.
- 27 Q. They did not say anything about what they might have seen? They did not see anything?
- 28 A. No, because I was not speaking to them. I was too busy at that time doing my job as a
- 29 logistics officer, so I do not know anything about that. I am sorry.
- 30 Q. Fine. You got together on a regular basis with the reports about the meetings with General
- 31 Mladic, or was there a compartmentalization between the different levels of command?
- 32 A. Can the interpreter repeat the question, please?

Witness: Koster

- 1 Q. Did you have any input about the meetings with General Mladic or was there no information
2 tricking down at the various levels?
3 A. No, I did not know what was going on. I did not know the exact details of the meetings
4 with General Mladic.

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